

First documented record of Sharp-billed Canastero *Asthenes pyrrholeuca* in Brazil

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Sharp-billed Canastero *Asthenes pyrrholeuca* breeds principally in Argentina, with smaller populations in Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay (Ridgely & Tudor 1994). Two subspecies are recognised. *A. p. sordida* breeds in central-south Chile and central-east Argentina. It is considered partially resident with unknown numbers migrating north in the austral winter, when it reaches northern and north-west Argentina, and southern Bolivia. *A. p. pyrrholeuca* breeds in central-south Argentina with some birds reaching northern and north-east Argentina as well as southern Paraguay (Hayes *et al.* 1994, Remsen 2003, Di Giacomo 2005). In Brazil, it was first recorded in extreme south-west Rio Grande do Sul state, near the border with Argentina (Uruguaiana), on 31 May 2001, in marshy habitat, and at the Uruguayan border (Quaraí), on 9 May 2005, in dry tall grasses among *Acacia caven* trees (Bencke *et al.* 2002, Repenning & Fontana 2007; Fig. 1). However, because of the lack of documentation in both cases, the species resides on the secondary list of Brazilian birds (CBRO 2009).



Figure 1. Map showing all known records of Sharp-billed Canastero *Asthenes pyrrholeuca* from Brazil: (1) Near the rio Uruguay, Uruguaiana municipality (29°55'S, 57°18'W), (2) Areal district, Quaraí municipality (30°25'S, 56°23'W) and (3) São Gabriel municipality (30°18'S, 54°24'W).



Figure 2. Ventral and lateral views of adult male Sharp-billed Canastero *Asthenes p. pyrrholeuca* (MCP 2804) found dead in São Gabriel municipality, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, on 9 March 2010 (Márcio Repenning)

We conducted observations on road-killed birds over 4 km of the BR-290, in May 2009–May 2010, in São Gabriel municipality in the centre-west of Rio Grande do Sul (Fig. 1). Natural vegetation in the area is a mosaic of grassland and scrub (Teixeira *et al.* 1986, Leite & Klein 1990). In the morning of 29 May 2009, a freshly dead bird was found at km 427 (30°18'S, 54°24'W). The bird probably collided with a car when flying across the road, suggesting that it was perhaps foraging in the surrounding grassland and marshy vegetation with low and sparse bushes.

The specimen was sent to the Laboratory of Ornithology at the Museu de Ciências e Tecnologia, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS), and was identified as *A. p. pyrrholeuca* (*sensu* Vaurie *et al.* 1980, Remsen 2003) based on the dark brown upperparts. It was prepared as a specimen and deposited in the collection of the same institution (MCP 2804). It was a male: testes (left) 2.0 × 1.0 mm and (right) 1.5 × 1.0 mm, weight 12.1 g, total length 162 mm, culmen length 13.80 mm and tail length 84 mm. Soft parts colours: bill Sepia with base of mandible Light Drab and tarsus Blackish Neutral Gray (Smithe 1975) (Fig. 2). These features and measurements distinguished the specimen from Short-billed Canastero *Asthenes baeri*, which is known to breed in Rio Grande do Sul (Remsen 2003).

This record and the previous two Brazilian observations (Bencke *et al.* 2002, Repenning & Fontana 2007) confirm that *A. p. pyrrholeuca* does migrate north (Palerm 1971, Remsen 2003), even as far as Brazil. Our May specimen confirms the hypothesis that the species is present in southern Brazil in autumn (Repenning & Fontana 2007). This first Brazilian specimen means that the species can be added to the primary list of Brazilian birds and is probably a winter visitor to far southern Brazil.

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